



INFORMATION NEEDS AND INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF USERS OF P.G.WOMEN COLLEGES IN VISAKHAPATNAM CITY

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Library is considered as the heart of any institution or organization, especially in academic institution. The all round development of the institution or organization depends on the library. Therefore, the college library should have a good collection of all types of information sources according to the requirements of the users. At the college level, library is the main source of information which can really help in building up a bright future for the students. Besides having a good collection, the library should also be able to provide the students with other facilities like internet etc, from which they can access plenty of information for their academic and research activities.

Information Seeking Behaviour

The phrase “information seeking behavior” is based on different concepts which are inter-linked to denote one process occurring in individuals in the library and information science context. The term ‘information seeking’ is related to library users who seek information in a variety of circumstances and from a variety of sources.

Behavior is defined as follows: The manner in which a person behaves in a reaction to social stimuli. An activity of a defined organism especially observable activity measurable in terms of quantifiable effects and environmental stimulus includes both external and internal aspects. Since behavior is logical to purpose and it stems from sources common to all behaviors, information seeking behavior also comprises of

- a)use of information sources
- b)method of information retrieval

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed towards achieving the following objectives:

- Ø To identify and study the information needs and information seeking behavior of users.
- Ø To understand the awareness of information services and facilities available in libraries.
- Ø To study the use pattern of books, periodicals and e-journals



Importance of the Study

Visakhapatnam is moving towards globalization. The Ministry of Higher Education aims to make Visakhapatnam as a hub of excellence in the region. As a result, universities and institutions are striving to provide the best quality of education to attract students from all over the surrounding places. However, it is impossible to imagine any university or college functioning effectively without good library resources and services. In order to provide good resources and services, it is important to identify the information needs of the communities that it serves. However, this process alone cannot work without knowing the ways individuals articulate, seek, evaluate, select, and use the required information, which is commonly known as information-seeking behavior. This study hopes to make a contribution to this area of information seeking behavior. The determination of information needs and seeking behavior of students will be a key factor in determining the appropriateness of academic libraries' sources and services, as well as determination of the success of library staff in meeting the needs of this group of users. Further, it would allow the library management to make decisions on which services should be reduced and which should be emphasized to meet the needs of the users. This study hopes to allow better prioritization of services. The findings of this study would also be useful for planning new strategies to serve this group of users in the best possible way.

Methodology

Once it is decided to conduct the survey on selected women Post Graduate College libraries, the list of Post Graduate College libraries along with number of users in each college is obtained. As per the information obtained, there are four P.G. Women Colleges in the city Visakhapatnam. And out of them three are selected for the present research. The reason for not covering the one Post Graduate Women College is that, it is established in recent past. Therefore it is exempted.

1. St Josephs College for Women (Autonomous), Visakhapatnam.
2. Visakha Govt Degree College for women.
3. Chaitanya Post Graduate for Women, Gajuwaka.

Tool of the Study

After careful preparation of study design, target group to be covered and objectives are specified. The next step is preparation of questionnaire and obtaining required information from users. Keeping in mind the objectives of study, an interview questionnaire is prepared, sequentially arranging the aspects to be covered and thus the questionnaire was prepared. The designed questioner was pretested in a nearby P.G. College library and after scrutinizing the responses, necessary modifications were made and the questionnaire was finalized and used in the survey. Areas covered in questionnaire are general information of users, information, facilities, electronic sources and services available in the libraries.



Table .1: Details of Post Graduate Women College Libraries coverage

S.NO	Name of the Post Graduate Women College	Year of establishment	Number of Users	contacted	responded
1	St Josephs College for Women (Autonomous), Visakhapatnam	2003	117	100	93
2	Visakha Govt Degree college for women	2003	79	50	37
3	Chaitanya Post Graduate College for Women	2001	423	250	170
	Total		619	400	300

In all colleges put together there are 619 users. It was decided to cover 50% users and the questioners are distributed to 400 students with an aim to reach the target. Out of 400 questioners distributed randomly only 300 fully responded questioners are given back though the researcher collected more questioners and found only 300 are fully filled therefore the remaining questioners are not considered data analysis. It means 75% of respondents and their opinions analyzed and sufficient for statistical validity.

Analysis of the Study:

The present study is based on the responses elicited from 300 girl students from the three PG Colleges for Women located in Visakhapatnam City. Composition of the respondents is presented below.

Frequency of visit to the Library

All the respondents were asked to mention how frequently they visit the library and their responses are shown in Table-2

Table-2. Distribution of respondents by Frequency of visit to the library

Frequency of visit	Arts & Commerce N=53		Science N=247		Total N=300		Chi-Square Value	Sig.
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Daily	28	52.8	55	22.3	83	27.7	21.027	0.05*
Once in a Week	18	34.0	145	58.7	163	54.3		
Once in a Month	2	3.8	20	8.1	22	7.3		
Occasionally	5	9.4	26	10.5	31	10.3		
Rare	0	0.0	1	0.4	1	0.3		

*Value significant at 0.05 level



All the three hundred respondents covered in the study have informed that they are visiting the library. It is noticed that, in the total sample, most of the students (54%) are visiting the library once in a week while 28% are daily visitors. Another 7% have reported that they visit the library once in a month and 10% are occasional visitors.

When a comparison between Arts and Science students is made, it is noticed that more than half of the students from Arts & Commerce reported that they visit the library daily while daily visitors among the Science students are only 22%. The reason could be that the students of science subjects have to attend practical sessions during the afternoon session. On the other hand, about 59% of the Science students reported that they visit the library once in a week and this percentage among Arts & Commerce is 34. Eight percent of the Science students and about 4 % of the Arts & Commerce students are visiting the library once in a month. Around 10% of the students from both Sciences and Arts & Commerce reported that they visit the library occasionally. There is influence of faculty on the frequency of visit to the library as evidenced by the chi-square value, which is significant at 5% level.

Purpose of visit to the Library

Purpose of visit to the library is an important factor as mere visiting the library does not fulfill the main objective of the library. All the respondents were asked to mention the purpose of their visit to the library and the responses are shown in Table-3

Table-3: Distribution of respondents by Purpose of visit to the library

Purpose of visit	Arts & Commerce N=53		Science N=247		Total N=300		Chi-Square	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	Value	Sig.
Borrowing class books	41	77.4	183	74.1	224	74.7	0.247	0.619
Borrowing text books	50	94.3	202	81.8	252	84.0	5.120	0.024*
Borrowing periodicals / Journals	26	49.1	89	36.0	115	38.3	3.131	0.077
Consulting reference books	43	81.1	165	66.8	208	69.3	4.215	0.040*
Inter library loan	7	13.2	13	5.3	20	6.7	4.426	0.035*
Requisition of books	15	28.3	76	30.8	91	30.3	0.126	0.725
For photo copies	27	50.9	82	33.2	109	36.3	5.940	0.015*
Reading newspapers	47	88.7	167	67.6	214	71.3	9.472	0.002*
For preparation of assignments	35	66.0	162	65.6	197	65.7	0.004	0.95
For preparation of Seminars	31	58.5	129	52.2	160	53.3	0.688	0.407
For using Internet facility	23	43.4	63	25.5	86	28.7	6.830	0.009*
A.V. Material	5	9.4	22	8.9	27	9.0	0.015	0.905
Others	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	-	-

* Value significant at 0.05 level

The main purpose of the visit to the library is reported as 'borrowing text books' as reported by 84% of the respondents. This percentage is more among the students of Arts & Commerce (94%) than among the Science students (82%). About 75% are visiting the library for 'borrowing class books'. This percentage is also more among the students of Arts & Commerce (77%) than among the Science students (74%). In the same way, about 69% of the respondents reported that they visit the library for 'consulting reference books'. Again this percentage is more among the students of Arts & Commerce (81%) than among the Science students (67%).



The percentage of respondents visiting the library for ‘preparation of assignments’ is about 66% and this percentage is more or less similar among the students of Arts & Commerce and Science. About 53% reported that they use the library for ‘preparation of seminar’ papers and this percentage is more among the Arts & Commerce students (59%) than among the Science students

In all only 38% reported that they visit the library for ‘borrowing periodicals / journals’. This response is recorded from 49% of the students from Arts & Commerce and 36% from the Science students. Only 29% reported that they come to the library for using the ‘Internet facility’. This percentage using Internet is more among the Arts & Commerce students (43%) than among the Science students (26%).

Visiting the library for ‘reading news papers’ is reported by about 71% of the respondents and this percentage is more among the Arts & Commerce students (89%) than the Science students (68%). About 365 of the respondents are visiting the library for ‘photo copies’ and another 30% for ‘requisition of books’. Very few are visiting the library for ‘inter library loan’ (7%) and for ‘AV material’ (9%).

Documents usually read in the Library

Information relating to the type of documents read usually in the library is another important aspect for the effective utilization of the facilities in the library. All the respondents were asked to mention the type of documents they read usually in the library and the responses are shown in Table-4

Table-4: Distribution of respondents by type of documents usually read in the library

Document Type	Arts & Commerce N=83		Science N=247		Total N=300		Chi-Square	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	Value	Sig.
Books	44	83.0	197	79.8	241	80.3	0.294	0.588
Periodicals	27	50.9	70	28.3	97	32.3	10.19	0.001*
Reference Books	49	92.5	212	85.8	261	87.0	1.692	0.193
Reports	13	24.5	37	15.0	50	16.7	2.865	0.091
Seminar Proceedings	20	37.7	95	38.5	115	38.3	0.01	0.921
Subject Encyclopedias	14	26.4	38	15.4	52	17.3	3.705	0.054*
News Papers	38	71.7	172	69.6	210	70.0	0.088	0.766
Models & Charts	11	20.8	47	19.0	58	19.3	0.083	0.773
Subject Dictionaries	17	32.1	50	20.2	67	22.3	3.522	0.061
Non-Book Material	1	1.9	5	2.0	6	2.0	0.004	0.948

* Value significant at 0.05 level



Most of the respondents (87%) reported that they usually read ‘reference books’ during their visit to the library. About 80% stated that they read ‘books’ and 70% mentioned that they read ‘newspapers’.

Reading of other types of document is reported by less than 50% of the respondents. About 38% read ‘seminar proceedings’, 32% read ‘periodicals’, 22% read ‘subject dictionaries’, 19% use models and charts and 17% each read ‘subject encyclopedias’ and ‘reports’. Only 2% reported use of non-book material in the library. Reading of all these material is reported more by the students of Arts & Commerce than the Science students.

However, the influence of course studying is noticed on the responses relating to reading of ‘periodicals’ and ‘subject encyclopedias’ as indicated by the computed chi-square values.

Table-5-Distribution of respondents by their opinion on Importance of journal articles for academic purpose

Opinion	Arts & Commerce n=53		Science n=247		Total n = 300		Chi-Square	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	Value	Sig.
Important	17	32.1	81	32.8	98	32.7	3.913	0.141
To some extent	33	62.3	128	51.8	161	53.7		
Not Important	3	5.7	38	15.4	41	13.7		

*Value significant at 0.05 level

It is observed that more than half (54%) of the respondents are of the opinion that the importance of the journal articles is only ‘to some extent’. This opinion is expressed by 62% of the students from Arts & Commerce and 52% from Science. There is no difference in the percentage stating that the journal articles are important for academic purpose between the two groups. About 14% expressed that these are not important for academic purpose.

The Information gathered from 300 respondents from 3 post graduate colleges for women located in Visakhapatnam city was analyzed using SPSS package. Most of the respondents reported their age more than 20 years. The selected respondents belonged to Arts, Commerce & Science groups. Out of the 300 selected respondents more than 85% respondents responded from Science courses. It is because, all the 3 colleges selected are offering a good number of courses in Science subject at PG



level compared to Arts & Commerce.

CONCLUSION:

Frequency of Visit to the Library

The respondents from science groups visiting the library reported low, when compared to arts & commerce. The students of science subjects have to spend reasonable time in laboratories. Therefore these students get a little time in any working day to use library sources. It is found that there is a scope to improve the visits to the Library by the respondents. The library managements should initiate such measures which encourages the user to visit the library regularly.

Purpose of Visit to the Library

Most of the Respondents visit the library for borrowing class books and text books. There is no significant difference between Science and Arts & Commerce groups.

Documents usually read in the Library

The usage of periodicals is reported low. To improve the use of periodicals by users the library should initiate necessary steps. More than 80% of respondents read books in the library, a promising feature and the usage of periodical literature by arts and commerce is far ahead compared to Science groups. But the usage of periodical by users is to be improved on priority basis.

Awareness of Information services in the Library

The awareness on reference service is reported to be more in Science group, but the Bibliography and Reprographic service is not up to the mark. The Bibliographic services are useful for preparation of assignments, Projects etc. Hence the conducting awareness program, on bibliographic services to help the users to use the available literature in library.

Opinion on Importance of journal articles for Academic purpose

About 86% of respondents felt the necessity of articles in periodicals for academic purpose. It indicates that the number of users using the available information in periodicals to fulfill their academic pursuits, a note worthy feature.

Most of the respondents expressed their satisfaction towards the collection available in library. Still there is scope for librarian to develop the collection in a balanced way, keeping the interest of users in mind, Further the users are asked to express their opinion on various types of collection. The users gave good response to text books and reference books.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE LIBRARIES

1. The library should seek the opinion of the users and experts to make use of



the library for their academic activities. It is suggested further the professionals should go to class rooms and explain the facilities available in library, and help the users while searching for books in the library.

2. It is suggested that the library should inform the users about the availability of periodical in the library and explain the importance and advantage to use this facility.
3. It is suggested has the orientation and training program be organized on various bibliographic services.
4. It is suggested that a kind of awareness program should be organization on e-resource, database etc.,

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